

Finding Yourself: Potential Essay Topics

Finding the personal “voice” to share with those who are trying to get to know you through your writing can be difficult. Maybe some of the potential topics listed below will help you find a vehicle to help others get to know who you really are.

Your Background: Does something in your background make you different from your peers in terms of where you have lived, what you have experienced or what you have been exposed to?

Events: Are there significant events in your life? How would you describe them and/or what would you say about those events and how they’ve affected you?

Feelings: What do you care most about? What makes you the happiest? What makes you angry? Where are you and what is going on in your life when you feel really strong positive or negative emotions? What makes you most proud?

Rising to the challenge: Have there been crises or challenges in your life? Have there been unusual victories or successes in your life? Are there problems you have had to solve? Have you been put in some really difficult circumstances? How did you handle them?

The big event: Where, when or how were you born?

Couldn’t have done it without him/her: Who has been a significant influence in your life since then? A parent? A sibling? A teacher or a coach? An employer? A friend or a neighbor?

Get a clue: What’s right in your world? What’s wrong in your world? What issues matter to you?

It made an impression: Is there something you have read, heard (e.g., music) or seen (e.g., a movie) that has made a real impression or difference in your life?

Possessions: What’s in your wallet, your purse, your locker, your car or your house?

Spirituality: Are there religious beliefs, activities or experiences that are important to you?

Skills: Do you have special talents, hobbies or activities?

Dreams: Do you have special dreams, goals or personal characteristics?

Helping others: Are you involved with work or volunteer activities that are making a difference in your life or the lives of others?

Decisions

Have you made any decisions, good or bad, that changed the course of your life?

I did it!

Describe a success you have had, or an example of your personal best.

Hope for the future

Tie your essay's theme to your career goals if you can. Give the reader a glimpse of the life you imagine during and/or after college.

Try, try, and try again.

Plan on several revisions of your essay. Who will read your essay and give you good advice?

Hook 'em!

How will your essay "grab the reader by the eye-lashes?"

What makes you, YOU?

Act/React

What kinds of situations make you feel happy? What in our world needs to be changed? How have you helped make a difference?

Interests and Activities

Your hobbies and interests tell a lot about who you are and how you think.

No one Understands...

Has there been a unique challenge you have faced? How did you deal with it? Are you the first person in your family to go to college?

People

Consider writing about people who have inspired or challenged you to be your best, but be sure it is about you, not all about them!

Work/Volunteering

Do you work, or spend any time volunteering? What have you learned about yourself as a result?

Check it out!

Are your ideas expressed clearly?

Is your spelling, grammar, and structure correct?

Is your closing clear, and free of clichés?

Does the essay show your personality and your personal voice?

Have you included important information about yourself that is not elsewhere on your application?

Don't go there...

Be careful if what you have to say is extremely controversial. If you are being negative, or it sounds like you are whining, change your tone. If you have special circumstances, it's OK to give explanations, but don't make excuses.